

Tough Times

Vol. 6 No. 5/September-October, 2017

LOCAL HISTORIAN POINTS THE WAY: A better future for young Black men

Peel's young Black male students have a vision ahead of them: a new deal in school -- an end to the exclusion of the Black experience; no more "marginalization" of Black students so that they don't aspire to higher education; an end, one hopes, to discrimination in Peel's school system.

The change is set out in *We Rise Together – Peel District School Board's Action Plan to Support Black Male Students*.

The plan begins this fall, as the school board sets up training sessions for staff, organizes contacts with the families of Black students, works toward schooling that is "free from discriminatory bias."

How do teachers feel about this?

Natasha Henry is a Black teacher, curriculum consultant, and author who works not only in Peel classrooms, but in researching and teaching Canada's Black history.

She sees *We Rise Together* and its underlying philosophy as "laudable," "much-needed", and "I applaud the Board for taking this step."

The history and experiences of Black people in Canada needs to be inserted into all topics in the curriculum, she says. Science classes should include references to the work of Black Canadian scientists; students need to know how slavery occurred in Canada, and how it ended; they need to recognize that activism in politics is part of the Black heritage, and not a recent adoption; that Black men served in the Colour



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Corps in the War of 1812, and got grants of land as reward – information which is not now part of

required teaching/learning in Peel schools, or any school board in Ontario.

Touching on politics, with provincial and municipal elections pending in 2018, Henry notes that if Black people today aspire to serve in the Legislature or in Parliament, they are not the first: Leonard Braithwaite, a lawyer, was elected to Queen's Park in 1963, becoming Ontario's first Black MPP.

She sees her own work in publicizing Black history as a political endeavour—creating a new vision of the future by presenting a more complete view of the past.

The Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO) has presented its 2017 Curriculum Development Award to Henry.

Check https://www.classroomconnection.ca/uploads/5/1/5/1/51516751/bbm_interactive_teacher_resource2016.pdf which contains four weeks of lessons in Black history.

With bachelor's and master's degrees in education from York University, Henry is working on a PhD in history. Her books include Emancipation Day: Celebrating Freedom in Canada, and Talking About Freedom: Celebrating Freedom in Canada. She received the 2014 gold medal Moonbeam Children's Book Award for non-fiction for Firsts.

She writes numerous articles, gives talks, conducts workshops. Lives in Mississauga with husband Dixon and their 11-year-old daughter.

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Special Section: All you need to know about HIV/AIDS

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Peel HIV/AIDS Network
serving Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon

PEEL POVERTY ACTION GROUP

Peel Poverty Action Group (PPAG) is open to every individual and organization in Peel Region that cares about what poverty does to people. It provides a safe place where people who are cash-poor and those who try to help them are encouraged to speak out – and *Tough Times* is part of that safe place.

The Group's mandate is to advocate for people in need and to educate the public about poverty issues. Membership is free. PPAG meets at 9:30 a.m. the second Thursday of every month (except July and August) alternately in Mississauga at the Newcomer Centre of Peel, 165 Dundas St. W., at Confederation Parkway; in Brampton at the John Howard Society, 134 Main St. N., just south of Church St.

Meetings for 2017

Brampton: September 14, November 9;

Mississauga: October 12, December, date to be decided.

www.ppag.wordpress.com

Homeless: The Video

Spaces and Places: Uncovering Homelessness in the Region of Peel is a 15-minute video in which homeless people describe their experiences. A team from PPAG, including a once-homeless person, will show the video to a group on request. There is no charge. To book a showing contact ppagactiongroup@gmail.com. Allow about 45 minutes for the video and discussion.

The video was made by a team from York University, in cooperation with the Social Planning Council of Peel, financed by a grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation.

You can buy *Spaces and Places* on a memory stick for \$50. Email ppagactiongroup@gmail.com or phone 905 826-5041.

WORDS FROM THE STREET

Thought for food

The price of food is going up. Over a five-year period, from 2009 to 2016, the cost of feeding a family of four went up 26%, from \$156.15 a week to \$197.13. That's right here in Peel, from statistics provided by Regional government.

If you needed help from Ontario Works or Ontario Disability Support Program, your income increased 1.5 per cent a year.

Leaves a gap, eh?

The gap has the attention of Peel's Poverty Reduction Strategy Committee, which has produced a Food Charter to be launched publicly in September.

The Charter declares: "Food is a right" and is presented as "a vision of a just, sustainable and secure food system, for now and the future."

It is intended as "a guide for practices, policies and priorities in achieving food security to ensure we meet the

needs and reflect the diversity of all who live and work in Peel."

Publicity material notes that children are more than half of the visitors to The Mississauga Food Bank agencies; and that 14% of Peel households are not properly fed – or, as the publicist states, they "experience marginal, moderate, or severe food insecurity."

Is "severe food insecurity" starvation or just not knowing where your next meal is coming from? Uncomfortable, either way.

As for the hungry people of Peel, the charter suggests they raise awareness of food needs among politicians, business people, faith groups and others.

Tough Times included a cookbook from The Mississauga Food Bank in a recent issue.

Word from cookbook readers who use food banks: "We just want the money to buy the food we want."

ToughTimes

Tough Times is published six times a year

Next issue: Nov.-Dec., 2017
Deadline for ads and editorial: October 1, 2017

All deadlines are the first day of the preceding month:
Jan.-Feb, 2018 deadline: December 1
March-April, 2018 deadline: February 1
May-June, 2018: April 1

Phone 905 826-5041

Volunteer writers, reporters, artists, cartoonists, photographers, are welcome at *Tough Times*.

Please email letters to:
toughtimestabloid@gmail.com

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Video about mental health in Peel

A prize-winning producer is among volunteers ready to make a video about mental health issues in Peel.

Arshed Bhatti is coordinator of Sahara Support Services, part of Punjabi Community Health Services in Peel.

His video-making experience includes reaching the top five among entries in the "Best existing age-friendly initiative competition" sponsored by the International Federation on Aging, plus he wrote and directed *Malala Muskrao (Hello Malala)* about Malala Yousufzai, famous for her international efforts to make education accessible to women and girls.

Arshed has volunteered to work with Peel Poverty Action Group (PPAG) on producing videos about mental health issues here. Ideas put forward so far include problems encountered by immigrants, and stigma attached to being diagnosed with a mental health difficulty.

Also on the production team is Andre Lyn of Peel United Way, who was involved in *Spaces and Places: Uncovering Homelessness in the Region of*



Peel, a 15-minute video sponsored by PPAG. Andre assembled the production team, obtained a \$75,000 grant for the video, and much more.

A meeting about PPAG's video projects is planned for **Tuesday, Sept 12 at 3 p.m. to 4.30 p.m. at the Peel Region building, 7120 Hurontario, Mississauga.** (West side of Hurontario, just north of Derry.)

Advertising Rates

Tough Times distributes 10,000 copies, throughout Peel Region.

Target audience is people experiencing homelessness, using food banks and soup kitchens, people who are struggling, plus faith groups, social service agencies, trades unions, business people, and the general public.

To advertise in Tough Times:
toughtimestabloid@gmail.com

Phone: 905 826-5041
Mail address: 4 - 287 Glidden Road
Brampton ON L6W 1H9, Canada

Advertising rates: (colour included)

Business card: \$90

1/16 page: \$100

1/8 page: \$155

1/4 page: \$240

1/2 page: \$430

3/4 page: \$600

Full page: \$755

A full page is approximately 10 inches wide by 12 inches deep = 120 square inches. E&OE

A night out on the town

WHERE A BAR IS THE SAFEST PLACE

TIt's the morning of July 4, and Tough Times is keeping telephone contact with a woman who is homeless.

Brenda Murdoch uses a walker so she can move around despite crippling arthritis which she has had since childhood – so early in her life, in fact, that the disease has interfered with her growth. Brenda is hanging out at a bar because, believe it or not, that is a safe place for a disabled woman alone.

Tough Times emails Peel Region just before noon, reporting that the lady is homeless and needs help.

However, we couldn't pass on her phone number until 6.13 p.m. and emailed the address of the bar at the same time, plus Brenda's report that she has not been able to lie down for 28 hours.

The Region alerted its Outreach Team which it says will locate Brenda and "provide the immediate necessary supports."

According to Peel Region's website:

"The Peel Outreach team is a responsive, mobile, multi-disciplinary team of professionals who work together with individuals who are homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness. We empower through short-term support, advocacy and referrals and meet people where they are at..."



Crippled by arthritis since childhood, BRENDAMURDOCH uses a walker rather than a wheelchair. (*Tough Times* photo)

The team includes workers with training in mental health, caseworkers with Ontario Works, housing support staff. The website says the team can help with housing, emergency shelter, and more.

Brenda says the Outreach Team phoned to tell her they couldn't help her, even though she had nowhere to spend the night.

Tough Times stayed in touch with Brenda and with Peel Region and with others for the rest of the day.

It was 10.30 at night when Brenda told Tough Times that the Cawthra shelter in Mississauga was sending a taxi to another bar she was using as a sanctuary, and would take her to the shelter.

At 10 a.m. next day, Brenda texts Tough Times: "At Cawthra shelter, trying to catch up on my sleep and get my bones to stop aching."

Credit where credit is due: Brenda's homelessness on July 4 was resolved by Kathryn Gibb of the Salvation Army. She arranged for the Cawthra shelter to send the cab. Tough Times provided Brenda's phone number and whereabouts.

End of story.

Or this particular part of it.

Brenda still does not have permanent housing. She needs an "accessible" place – no steps to enter, wide doorways because she can't move around without her walker, and shower with a seat and grab bars, so she won't fall.

How many "accessible" places are available to people in Peel who live on Ontario Works or on Ontario Disability Support Program or some other form of low or no income.

There's the one accessible that Brenda now inhabits at the Cawthra shelter; two accessibles at Peel's shelter for men in Brampton, and one or more at Peel's family shelter in Mississauga.

There may be more.

Brenda notes: "A lot more will be needed with an aging population."

Just for the record, here are some snippets from other emails and conversations from July 4 and since:

July 4:

2.37 p.m. Brenda: "Nowhere to go none of my meagre possessions."

6.13 p.m.: Brenda tells *Tough Times* that the police dropped her off at Days Inn, but she couldn't stay there. She had cash, but Days Inn insists on a credit card which she does not have. (Many hotels have similar rules.)

7.53 p.m. Brenda: "Unforgiveable that no one will help me."

Tuesday, July 11

2.05 p.m.: "I spoke with (a helping agency) and I've hit yet another brick wall. They said there was no point in even completing an application because I don't have addiction or mental problems. And I asked as I have so many many times: Where is the help for physically disabled people? And as always there is no help."

Peel Poverty Action Group (PPAG) has invited Brenda to its next meeting Thursday, 14 September, 9.30 a.m. in Brampton, place to be confirmed. This is a public meeting. People with disabilities are especially invited.

NEED FOOD?

غذا در کار بے?
ਭੇਜਨ ਦੀ ਜ਼ਰੂਰਤ?
需要食物吗?
Cần thực phẩm?
هل تحتاج إلى الطعام?
¿Necesita comida?



Don't Go Hungry

If you don't have enough money for food and live in Mississauga, you can go to a neighbourhood food bank.

It doesn't matter about your age, gender, sexual orientation, race, religion, or immigration status. You will receive enough healthy food to feed your family for 7-10 days each month. There is no cost to visit a food bank.

Find your food bank at
www.themississaugafoodbank.org
or phone 905.270.5589.



Raising mathematical whiz kids

Knowing about numbers is an essential skill that some young folk find difficult.

But let them begin studies in kindergarten, supplemented by hints from home, and they can become experts without even knowing it.

This was the lesson for teachers taking part in three-day workshops this summer, “academies” put on by the Elementary Teachers’ Federation of Ontario (ETFO), including sessions in Mississauga.

Learning should be part of everyday experience. At home, parents can have children help with the laundry -- count the items as you drop them in the washer, count the blue ones, the green ones, maybe add them up. When the sheets and towels are folded, they take up less space, change from wide rectangle to smaller squares, from flat surfaces to cubes. Mention these changes to your children.

You can have your little people help with baking. Two half-cup measures are equal to one full cup, whether it's flour, sugar, raisins. Talk to them about it.

You can find bits of wood to illustrate angles and shapes. “Here’s a right-angle,” “This is a square.”

And when bedtime comes, there are questions such as: “We are at page eight. How many pages until we reach page 10?”

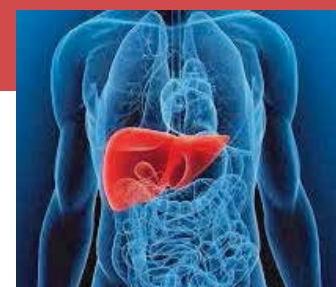
It’s all very simple, and very every-day. That’s how math should be.



Above: Three-year-old Brady learns how many fingers are two, three, four, and what measuring cups are all about as he assists Mom with the baking. It helps that Mom is a teacher at Hazel McCallion Senior Public School in Mississauga.

Left: Kindergarten experts Pam Rao (left) of Welland and Nancy Theal of Niagara Falls taught teachers how to bring math into the everyday, at a three-day work session at the Hilton-Meadowvale in Mississauga. Teaching children to use dice and cards is a fun way to play the numbers. (*Tough Times* photo)

Hepatitis C Treatment, Care & Support Is Available



You can be at risk if:

- Sharing of personal care and hygiene items such as razors, toothbrushes, clippers and scissors with someone living with hepatitis C
- Sharing needles used for body tattoos and piercings. Reusing and sharing tattoo ink and ink pots
- Sharing drug equipment such as needles, filters, tourniquets, water, syringes, cookers, alcohol swabs, acidifiers
- Receive blood and body organs that have not been screened for hepatitis C. Even in Canada, if you received blood and organ donations before 1990 you may be at risk.
- Involved in medical procedures including immunization in hepatitis C endemic countries



Bloom Clinic

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Bloom Clinic
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Phone: 905-451-6959 | mail@bramaleachc.ca

Call today for information or
to book a free test.

Take the ache out of teeth and save \$4 million

PEEL'S DENTAL STORY

Should dental care be covered by OHIP?

The question is raised in recent reports by Peel Public Health and Wellfort Community Health Services.

And a group is in the making – an Oral Health Coalition in Peel – to get better dental care through lobbying various levels of government.

Looking after our teeth may even be a paying proposition – saving an estimated \$4 million on visits to hospital emergency rooms in Peel to treat conditions that would not have occurred with regular care by a dentist.

And that's not all. Peel residents who now endure sleepless nights from toothache, can't eat properly, and don't smile much, would get their teeth fixed.

Sounds like a lot of work for Peel's 900 dentists.

Check out *Oral Health in Peel: Key Findings about Risk Factors and Oral Health Outcomes, 2017*.

Published by Peel Public Health, it looks at the broader aspects of dental health:

"Good oral health is an important component of overall health and quality of life. Some oral health conditions such as tooth decay are preventable, and while most are usually not life threatening, they can cause pain; have physical, social and psychological impacts; and result in costly treatment. Furthermore, there is an association between poor oral health and chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart conditions and respiratory disease," the report notes.

It also touts the importance of daily brushing and flossing, regular visits to a dentist, keeping your sugar intake in check, ditto tobacco, booze, and drugs, and guarding your teeth in sports.

Peel residents are quite good at being good. The Region's studies showed that about 70% of us visited a dentist during the year, 88% of us brush our teeth twice a day (though only 8% of students floss daily), and 64% of students wear a mouth guard during sports.

However, all is not well with the small fry. In Peel, one in three children in kindergarten and Grade 2, and one in two children in grades 10 and 12, have decayed, missing or filled teeth.

Among adults, teeth problems mean that 6% of Peel residents can't chew their food, 3% can't speak clearly, 4% have "a social limitation," 43% are in pain. Among children, 18% of children from Grade 2 down, and 63% of students in Grades 10 and 12,

have bleeding or swollen gums.

Some of these problems can be blamed on lack of dental insurance. In Peel, 66% of residents have dental insurance of some kind. But only about 30% of seniors 65+ have insurance, and fewer than half of new immigrants are covered. The higher your income, the more likely you are to have insurance – 30% of low income are insured for dental work, close to 80% of high income folk have dental insurance. Cost is a factor in the 30% of people who decided not to visit a dentist.

A quick check of the internet found dental insurance at \$81.50 a month for under 45s, at \$87.90 a month at 65, and \$116.10 at 90-plus.

Staying away from the dentist may result in a visit to a doctor or a trip to a hospital for emergency care, costing more than a dentist -- but paid by OHIP.

In 2013, Peel residents with dental problems made 13,087 visits to a doctor, 4,134 visits to emergency, and 325 had hospital stays for conditions affecting oral health.

A group is in the making – an Oral Health Coalition in Peel – to get better dental care through lobbying various levels of government.

For the future, Peel Region wants better information gathering, improvements to and expansion of dental health programs available to residents, and to "continue to advocate for publicly-funded oral health programs for vulnerable populations such as low-income adults and seniors."

Wellfort finds the holes in dental care.

"With the exception of the provincially-funded dental programs for the few, many residents who seek dental care have to pay either out-of-pocket or through employer-provided dental insurance.

"With the high cost associated with dental treatment, this serves as a barrier for yet other vulnerable groups -- the poor, those unemployed, in precarious jobs with no dental insurance benefits amongst others.

"The impact of dental health insurance inequalities is significant, especially with a third [of its workforce] employed in precarious jobs with no dental benefits.

Peel subsidizes dental care for seniors and adults and children on social assistance are able to access provincially-funded programs, there are yet gaps in dental coverage for low-income earning adults in Peel."

Wellfort noted that recent Ontario studies show that one in five Ontarians cannot afford to see a dentist. "This translates to 280,000 people in Peel unable to afford dental treatment."

Oral disease "disproportionately affects the poorest and marginalized groups," and

"The privately-funded dental care model in Ontario contributes to the barriers preventing people from accessing oral health services." As well, "the need for good dental health for residents in Peel as an important aspect of overall health and a determinant of quality of life."

Wellfort organized focus groups around dental care, and one participant remarked: "We need a dental plan like OHIP but for basic dental care, such as cleaning, root canal treatment and broken teeth."

The Wellfort report continued: "In order to move forward, a call for collaboration between community-led organizations, local health agencies and professionals, policy makers and the community would help transform the oral health landscape of Peel."

Dental health advocates, including health care agencies, social justice groups, and Peel Public Health, see a need to publicize the problems with oral health care, support appropriate public policies, campaign for expansion of publicly-funded dental programs to include low-income adults and seniors, and set up an Oral Health Coalition in Peel.

The Coalition would ask the federal government to develop a national oral health policy.

The Ontario government would be urged to "develop oral health policies that integrate the broader issues of social, economic and environmental determinants of health," and "Include dental care in a universal health insurance plan."

You can find Peel Region's report at <https://www.peelregion.ca/health/resources/pdfs/2017-oral-health-report-key-findings.pdf>

The Wellfort report is at http://www.wellfort.ca/healthnsmiles/assets/pdfs/Peel%20Oral%20Health_Where%20are%20we%20201.pdf

Affordable City Campaign

ACORN, a non-profit organization of low and moderate income families, has launched an Affordable City Campaign in Mississauga. Members want affordable housing, childcare, accessible transit and landlords should be licensed to ensure tenants'

rights are protected.

Members of ACORN also hope to work with Mississauga councillors to continue a program that makes half-price (\$65) transit passes available to low-income citizens. The program is set to close December

31. But it has been set to close before, then extended because too few cash-poor people bought into the lower-priced passes. Ontario Works pays a single person \$681 a month (raise expected soon). But with rents in the \$400 range, there's scarcely

enough for meals, let alone taking a trip around town. Seems even \$65 is too much.

ACORN (Association of Community Organization for Reform Now) has groups in nine cities across Canada. Its website is at acorncanada.org

Finding a job is a job in itself

JOBS AND HOW TO GET THEM: YOUR LIBRARY CAN HELP

ToughTomes

BY LAURA BILYEA, Librarian
Central Library, Mississauga

How do I even start?
What is a resume and how do I make one?
Where do I find jobs that need filling?
Can I make sure I'm doing something I like to do?
What do I need to do to make sure I get the job I want?

Mississauga Central Library runs regular programs to help with these questions. Once a month, a Resume Help afternoon takes place, where you can develop your resume with a career counsellor from the Centre for Education and Training. Every month, we also host a Job Hunting Resources program, where library staff shows off all the books, e-resources and websites that help job-hunters. Phone (905)615-3500, ext. 3589, to reserve your free spot.

Here is a list of books to get you started:

What Next: Find the work that's right for you (2017)

by Barbara Moses

This is a career counselling book for people in all stages of their working career. It covers finding work that's right for you, understanding your options, how to network, job search and market yourself effectively, how to deal with career distress.



5 Steps to Rapid Employment: The Job You Want At the Pay You Deserve (2014)

By Jay A Block.

Learn how to find and get the job you want, whether you're just out of college or transitioning into a new career. Follow Block's simple process to manage negative emotions that impede success, define clear career goals, master self-marketing skills and many more.

How to Find Work in the 21st Century: A Guide to Finding Employment in Today's Workplace (2013)

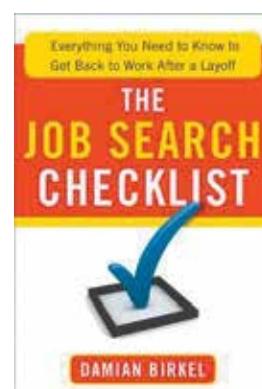
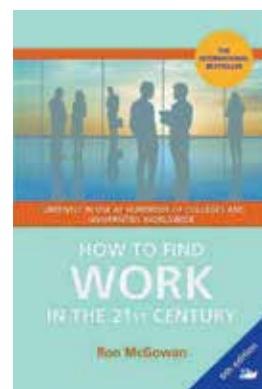
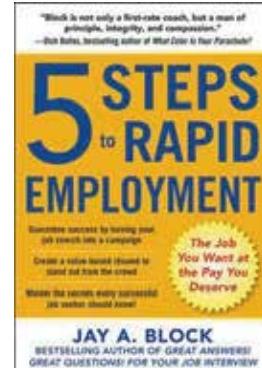
by Ron McGowan

A comprehensive guide to finding meaningful employment with tips on how to define what you have to offer employers, how to market and sell yourself, how to network effectively and how to use social media tools to find employment.

The Job Search Checklist: Everything You Need to Know to Get Back to Work After a Layoff (2014)

By Damian Birkel

With the tips and tactics

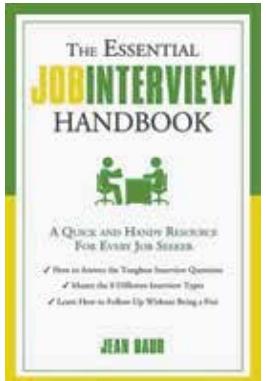


featured in *The Job Search Checklist*, you'll learn how to turn your loss into opportunity and find another job fast. This guide covers everything from dealing with the emotional impact of being laid off, to rebuilding your professional identity.

The Essential Job Interview Handbook: A Quick and Handy Resource for Every Job Seeker (2013)

by Jean Baur

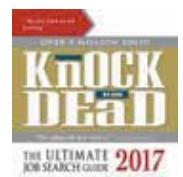
The Essential Job Interview Handbook will help job seekers prepare effectively for interviews and become familiar with different types of interview questions and styles of interviews. A unique feature of this book is the multiple answers it provides for each question, rated good, better, and best; with this feature, you'll learn what makes a winning answer and understand the strategy behind it.



Knock'Em Dead 2016 Ultimate Guide

by Martin John Yates

Whether you're looking for a first job, re-entering the market, or planning a career change, this book provides you with a roadmap to professional success. You'll learn how to create resumes that get results, turn job interviews into offers and manage a career climbing the ladder of promotion.



Happy hunting and see you at the library!

Laura Bilyea is a librarian at Mississauga Central Library

Cecil Peters Award for dedicated volunteer

Sheila Sheard is the 2017 Volunteer of the Year for Knights Table, Brampton's 365-days-of-the-year soup kitchen. Sheila received the Cecil Peters award for her "extraordinary and unwavering dedication" to Knights Table's Kids Breakfast Program. The Award is named after Cecil Peters, who founded Knights Table 26 years ago, to help feed and empower vulnerable members of the community.

More than 1,700 volunteers donated 42,000 hours to Knights Table during 2017. Many received awards and recognition at the annual Volunteer and Donor Appreciation Night at Bovaird Banquet and Convention Centre in Brampton.

(Photo by Godwin Darkwah)



MORE NEWS FROM KNIGHTS TABLE

Soup kitchen on simmer

Mississauga is to get a community soup kitchen that will serve free meals every day of the year.

Knights Table, which already runs a kitchen in Brampton offering three meals a day, plus a food bank, plus training opportunities, plus help for families with children, is the lead in plans to serve the hungry and homeless in Mississauga.

The Knights Table directors are looking for a 10,000 square foot place in Mississauga, and are still open to suggestions about exactly where it should be – where there are people in need, transportation, and a supportive community.

Peel HIV/AIDS Network

serving Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon

Programs and services



Support programs for people living with HIV

Our Support Programs include case management, practical assistance, and support for people living with HIV and their family members and caregivers.

Services include:

- Counselling
- Peer support, social activities, and networking opportunities
- Skills- development and mentorship opportunities
- Referrals to doctors, lawyers, community, and social agencies
- Assistance completing applications, such as the Trillium Drug Plan
- Accompaniment to appointments

HIV prevention and health promotion programs

HIV prevention activities take a health promotion approach that is centred in harm reduction. We offer a range of programs and service tailored to communities most affected by HIV.

- HIV and sexual health training for diverse populations
- Distribution of safer - sex materials and resources
- Drop-ins (Sex Worker and Trans Women)
- Peer- led programming
- Needle and safer inhalation kit exchange
- Referrals to services providers, lawyers, and social agencies
- Housing supports
- Social networking activities
- Community outreach

Mission statement

Peel HIV/AIDS Network is committed to serving diverse people living with and affected by HIV/AIDS and to limiting the transmission of the virus through support, education, advocacy, and volunteerism.

Our Values:

- Confidentiality, Respect, and Caring
- Safe and supportive space

Community development and partnerships

We facilitate capacity- building workshops and activities for community agencies and service providers.

- Educational workshops focused on a variety of topics (visit our website for more information)
- Collaborative initiatives with service providers and social agencies

Contact us today at (905) 361- 0523

Support Our Mission

www.phan.ca

info@phan.ca

601-7700 Hurontario St.

Brampton, ON L6Y 4M3

Monday - Friday: 9:00 a.m. to 5:00

Introduction to PHAN

For the past 20 years, the Peel HIV/AIDS Network (PHAN) has provided a growing array of health promotion, education, social and support services for people living with HIV, their families, partners and community members. Through collaborative efforts and effective service delivery, PHAN has become the leading HIV/AIDS service provider for the Region of Peel's 3 distinctive communities of Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon.

We strive to improve the lives of individuals in our community with programming and initiatives that foster a sense of belonging and inclusion. We offer a range of tailored educational programs for diverse communities, including: a sexual health leadership course for young gay and bisexual men; a series of diverse leadership training opportunities for people living with and affected by HIV; and workshops covering a variety of topics for healthcare and social service providers and educators.

Stigma in our communities

The Peel HIV/AIDS Network works with a diversity of communities; primarily, LGBTQ communities, African Caribbean Black (ACB) communities, people living with HIV, sex workers, and substance users. Common among all of the communities that we serve, stigma poses a significant barrier for our clients in accessing resources, support, and opportunities of all kinds.

Stigma leads to the devaluation of entire communities, who are understood for one reason or another to have transgressed, or in some way violated social norms. The effects of stigma are far-reaching, and borne out at the social, policy, community-wide, institutional, and educational levels. Cultural and community norms and traditions commonly serve to reinforce stigma around sexuality, gender identity, ethnicity, class, HIV status, and culture.

Partner Study: 58,000 condomless sex acts

Opposites Attract Study: 16,889 condomless sex acts between gay couples

0 HIV transmissions from positive partners on effective treatment to negative partners

Know the science. End the stigma.
Undetectable = Untransmittable

Peel HIV/AIDS Network
serving Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon



#UequalsU

HIV Basics
What You Need to Know

- 1 HIV attacks the immune system. HIV, short for Human Immunodeficiency Virus, attacks and destroys CD4 cells in the immune system. Without treatment, it can advance to AIDS, or Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome.
- 2 HIV cannot be cured, but it can be treated. In its early days, HIV had a very high death rate, but today antiretroviral therapy (ART) allows HIV+ people to live long, happy, productive lives. Frequent testing allows people to know their HIV status and start treatment as soon as possible.
- 3 Undetectable = Untransmittable. HIV+ people on effective treatment who maintain an undetectable viral load cannot transmit the virus sexually to others. #UequalsU
- 4 Anyone can contract HIV. HIV can be transmitted through blood, sex, sex toys, tattoo and piercing equipment, drug injection equipment, and breastfeeding. You cannot tell what someone's lifestyle is just by knowing their HIV status.
- 5 But HIV is not spread as easily as some may think. HIV is not transmitted through casual contact such as hugging, shaking or holding hands, or kissing.

Peel HIV/AIDS Network
serving Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon

#ScienceNotStigma

U=U

Undetectable = Untransmittable

A groundbreaking Consensus Statement endorsed by doctors and over 260 organizations confirms that people living with HIV/AIDS who have an undetectable viral load (<200 copies/mL) have a negligible to non-existent chance of transmission.

@PHANpeel @phانpeel

Peel HIV/AIDS Network
serving Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon

#UequalsU

One pill a day can prevent an HIV Negative person from contracting HIV.
Ask your doctor about PrEP.

FAQ about PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis)

Pre-exposure prophylaxis, or PrEP, is a safe and highly effective method of preventing HIV infection that is recommended for HIV negative people who are at significant risk of acquiring HIV. The PrEP regimen involves a pill, Truvada, which is taken on a daily basis. The pill contains two medicines (tenofovir and emtricitabine). When an HIV negative individual who is taking PrEP is exposed to HIV, these active ingredients prevent the virus from replicating itself in the body and establishing an infection. Taken consistently, PrEP has been proven to reduce the risk of HIV infection in people who are at high risk by up to 92%.

Women's drop-in

Currently the Drop-In is hosted at John Howard Society 134 Main St N Brampton ON. Drop In meets in the boardroom on Mondays between 10am – Noon.

The drop in provides light snacks and refreshments, harm reduction supplies, a clothing exchange once every 8 weeks, hosts a public health nurse once a month for questions and testing and invites community partners 1-2 times a month to provide information on services and workshops on mental health, addictions, budgeting and housing. A calendar of events is posted on PHAN's website as well as on location at PHAN, John Howard Society & Redemption.



Stigma in our communities continued

The stigma that follows people living with HIV has been described as the single most critical barrier to curtailing the HIV epidemic. HIV-related stigma adversely affects HIV prevention, rates of new infections, access and adherence to treatment, and access to social and practical supports.

The only way to combat deeply entrenched stigma is to address it head on. PHAN's multi-faceted approach to reducing stigma in our communities involves open dialogue, education, and support. We raise awareness about stigma in the hopes of encouraging community members to access the services, tools, and knowledge that are critical to the work of reducing stigma in our communities. With your support, we look forward to building communities that are stronger and more inclusive, and futures that are better and brighter for community members.

Harm reduction

Harm reduction is a public health measure which aims to reduce the adverse health, social and economic consequences of risky behaviours (substance use, unprotected sex etc.) from a nonjudgmental point of view.

Focusing on reducing harms to individuals, family and community, PHAN started its injection drug use outreach program in 1998. Our outreach programs include: Needle exchange, condom and lube distribution, information and education about safer needle use and sex, street and prescription drug information, counseling, peer education programming, referrals to addiction services, housing, HIV testing and other services. All services are free and confidential.





Knock Down Stigma Bowl-A-Thon!

PHAN to Switch Things Up for
2017's Scotiabank AIDS Walk Peel

Whether you're looking for a corporate team building experience, a group outing, or an opportunity to have a blast supporting a great cause, this event is for you.

September 30, 2017, marks the first ever Knock Down Stigma Bowl-a-thon, signalling an exciting departure from the walk-a-thons of years past. This year we're rallying the troops and taking a swing at stigma.

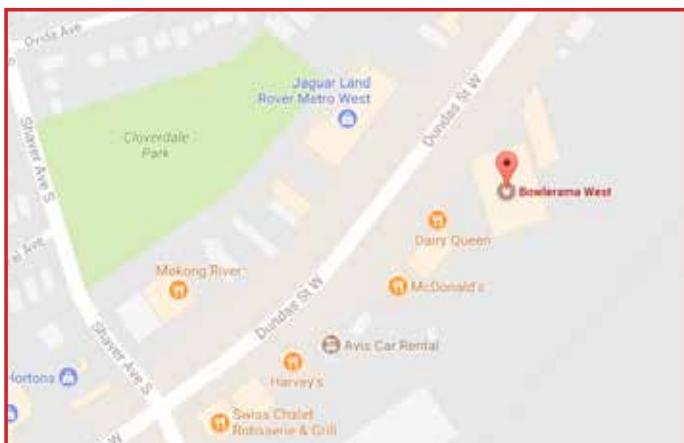
Get ready to bring your "A-Game" to Knock Down Stigma! Whether as an individual or part of a team, register today and join us as we bowl to raise money for the communities most affected by HIV. Space is limited so register now at knockdownstigma.com!

Event Details

Date: Saturday, September 30, 2017

Time: 1 p.m.- 4 p.m.

Location: Bowlerama West, 5429 Dundas St W, Etobicoke, ON M9B 1B5



Join us in the fight to knock down stigma!

Join the Peel HIV/AIDS Network at Bowlerama West and help support vital programs and services for the people and communities most affected by HIV. This year's Knock Down Stigma campaign also aims to raise awareness about the stigma facing many of our communities.



Scotiabank AIDS WALK™
PEEL | SEPT. 30, '17



IT TAKES COURAGE is a community-driven strategy focused on reducing the stigma too often associated with HIV/AIDS, through the leadership and active involvement of communities of faith. The goal is to increase understanding of issues about HIV that will make African, Caribbean and Black (ACB) communities across Ontario more welcoming to those living with, and affected by HIV/AIDS.

The Peel HIV/AIDS Network (PHAN) (through its African, Caribbean, Black Health Promotion program) is working with churches, mosques and other faith communities serving the Black population to implement the strategy in Peel. Interested faith communities will have access to a handbook, a manifesto, video clips and other materials that they can use to initiate discussions about HIV and HIV stigma.

What you can do:
Contact us: 905-361-0523 ext. 218/alexandera@phan.ca

It takes courage

HIV Stigma: The Concern of the Church?

Get the answers to:

- What makes someone vulnerable to HIV?
- What are the HIV stats in Canada and Peel?
- How can the faith community help reduce HIV stigma?

Black Communities **Church Communities**

Join us!

TH September 21, 2017
10 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
Kennedy Road Tabernacle
141 Kennedy Road N
Brampton, ON L6V 1X9

Register on [Eventbrite](#) Contact alexandera@phan.ca for more info

Peel HIV/AIDS Network
serving Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon



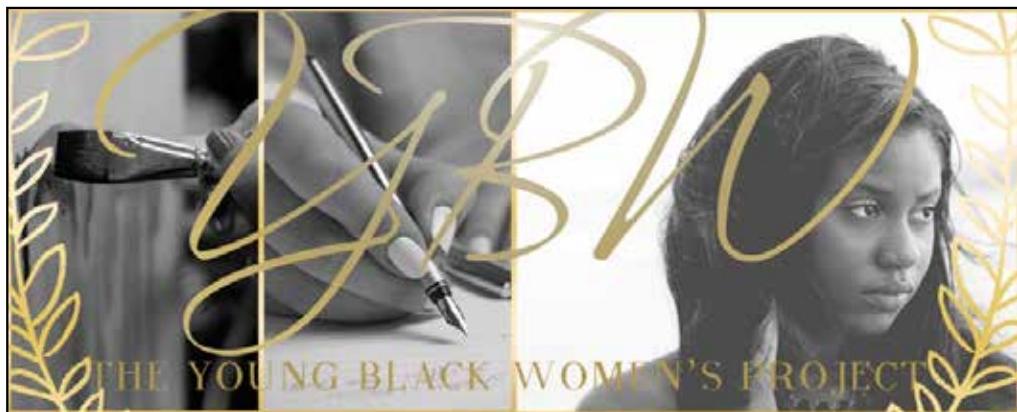
The sex you want

In a world where gay men are becoming increasingly open in exploring their sexualities, a campaign was developed by the Gay Men's Sexual Health Alliance to provide a comprehensive online resource that can provide sexual health information in a fun, sex-positive way. The campaign provides information on PrEP, PEP, undetectable status, HIV, sero-sorting, barebacking, topping, bottoming, and testing.

Do you want to meet other young, fun, smart gay and bi guys in Peel?

Totally outright

Totally Outright is a leadership program designed to provide young queer, gay and bi men (including trans* men and men living with HIV) with opportunities to learn from community members who work in the sexual health field and other areas concerned with a variety of gay and bi men's health related issues. Throughout Totally Outright, up to 20 young men participate in interactive, fun, thought provoking presentations, workshops, and social activities with community leaders. The program, run over two weekends, allows men to connect outside of a bar or online setting to develop resiliency to make better decisions about sex, relationships, and substance use.



Young black women's project

This September, Young Black women residing in the Peel region are invited to take part in an innovative new leadership program, the Young Black Women's Project. Graduates from the program will gain increased confidence to communicate, advocate, negotiate for personal and community interests, and serve as effective leaders in social and professional networks.

The Young Black Women's Project will explore issues that impact self esteem and connection to community, viewed through an intersectional lens that considers the interplay of disparate forces in the lives of young Black women.

Broadly speaking, the experiences of young Black women are shaped by the influences of multiple power disparities grounded in social constructs of race, gender, age, and socio-economic status. For many, the path to adulthood is complicated by competing expectations, ideologies, dictates, and social mores imposed by social, cultural, religious, and societal institutions. The project aims to provide a safe space in which self-expression is unfiltered, and shared experiences readily understood. The eight-part, trans-inclusive workshop series is open to black women aged 15 to 34. Participants will use various forms of writing, spoken word poetry, visual art, oral presentations, and other creative mediums to explore issues that impact self esteem and connection to community such as trauma, sex and relationships, mental health, and self-image. Project participants, in collaboration with a Special Advisory Committee comprised of community members, leaders, and advocates, will choose a selection of finished works to include in an original publication. The Young Black Women's Project book will be made available for purchase on Amazon and widely distributed across the region, serving to shine a light on the voices of young Black Women in Peel. At the Young Black Women's Project Book Launch, project participants will also be provided with a free personal copy of the book to share with friends and family.

The Young Black Women's Project is an initiative founded by the Peel HIV/AIDS Network (PHAN) and made possible by a stellar team comprised of PHAN staff members, community partners, peer leaders, and community members who share our commitment to providing safe spaces for young Black women to explore important issues.



COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS OF CANADA
FONDATIONS COMMUNAUTAIRES DU CANADA
all for community. ensemble pour tous.



Canada

Peer leadership council

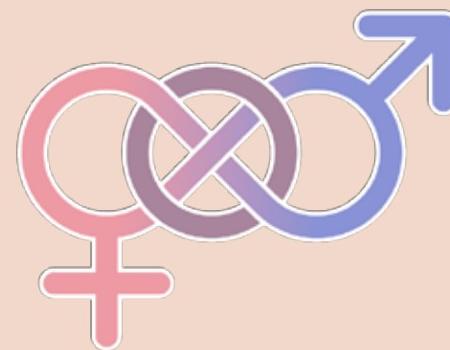
Peel HIV/AIDS Network is actively seeking passionate, committed individuals to contribute to the legacy of our newly-formed Peer Leadership Council (PLC). This role represents a tremendous opportunity to meaningfully impact the health, wellbeing, and prosperity of PHAs living in Peel region. The PLC will serve as a platform to elevate the voices of leaders in our communities, who will lead the charge in effecting real change in the lives of our peers. Your active contribution as a member of the PLC will shape the future of programming and service offerings for PHAs. If you would like to be a part of the change that you wish to see in the world, we want to hear from you.

For more information or to apply, visit us at www.phan.ca



Gender journeys

Gender Journeys is a peer-led workshop series that aims to improve the health of transgender communities in Peel. Founded by the Public Health Agency of Canada for five years, Gender Journeys will provide a safe space, in addition to networking and skills-building opportunities, for transgender communities residing in the region. The program consists of eight workshop sessions focused on mental health, sexual and reproductive health, and HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis C prevention.



pride in volunteering

The purpose of this project is to address the specific issue of LGBTQ+ volunteer inclusion. Pride in Volunteering is opening doors to safe and inclusive voluntary sector organizations for the LGBTQ+ community to make a difference in the lives of others. A core value of volunteer management is that everyone, without exception, has something to contribute to their community and the power to make an impact. As such, each organization's volunteer pool needs to be reflective of the community that it serves. This ensures that everyone, through the act of volunteering, has a chance to transform

their lives and the lives of others. In fact, the mandate of volunteer management is to promote the reciprocal nature of volunteering, which means that volunteers get as much from their experience as those whom they support. It is therefore important to make these experiences accessible to as many people as possible.

Come check us out at our Brampton women's safe space drop-in

Hosted by: Peel HIV/AIDS Network and The John Howard Society Peel, Halton and Dufferin as a product of the REACH collaborative

WHERE: John Howard Society- Brampton Office
(134 Main St. N. Brampton, ON, L6V 4J7)

WHEN: Mondays at 10AM

Any woman who is in need of a safe space or a group of supportive women is welcome!!!

Activities Included: Workshops, Training and Seminars, Sexual Health Education and Testing, Support Groups, Life Skills Building, Referrals to Different Social Services, Peer Outreach Worker Facilitator and much more!



CLOSING THE GAP

Justice know-how for newcomers

"The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom guarantees the rights and freedoms set out in it subject only to such reasonable limits prescribed by law as can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society."

(Constitution Act, 1982)

BY SAMINA BANGASH

Rights do little good to those who do not know such rights or those who do not understand the process of how to enforce these rights.

Peel Region demographics are changing with the arrival of immigrants and refugees. Unless we cater to the needs of the community, we may create a gap that will cause more frustration among different ethno-cultural, diverse and marginalized communities.

Based on the Access to Justice Fund (ATJF) and with the support of legal and settlement-based agencies in Peel, the MIAG Centre for Diverse Women and Families is training frontline workers and managers, social workers, counsellors and others, in providing legal education to racialized groups, particularly immigrants and refugees.

Titled *Closing the Gap: Building Service Providers' Legal Capacity to Improve Access to Justice for Immigrants and Refugees*, MIAG provides five training sets (two in Mississauga, two in Brampton, and one in Caledon), each comprising five to eight workshops. The goal is to train 100-125 service providers and community leaders to provide their clients with information about the law on such subjects as violence (domestic, sexual, harassment) and parents' rights and responsibilities towards their children.

MIAG believes that this is the most effective course of action, as research has shown that low-income and socially-isolated people are most likely to seek out, or rely on, in-person support from trusted intermediaries such as community and social workers, to receive legal information.

Many recent immigrants to Ontario begin life here with little money, due to

challenges such as recognition of foreign credentials and lack of Canadian work experience. In every Canadian province, including Ontario, the prevalence of low-income is higher among racialized groups than compared to other Canadians. According to research by Peel Poverty Reduction Strategy Committee in 2013, 33% of recent immigrants and 20% of racialized people live in poverty. This is a staggering figure given that the average poverty rate in Peel is 12.6%.

Recent immigrants and refugees not only face significant day-to-day challenges in adapting to new surroundings, but also face barriers to justice through lack of language, lack of information and knowledge of the legal system, and lack of money to hire legal representation and services.

At 50.5%, immigrants comprise more than half of Peel's total population – the highest percentage in the Greater Toronto Area. About two-thirds of these immigrants belong to a "racialized group."

With the sudden influx of Syrian refugees in the GTA, service providers have talked about feeling overwhelmed. MIAG's training courses will build the capacity and skills of service providers to respond to clients' basic legal needs.

With regard to refugees, in 2014 Ontario welcomed 11,400 – almost half of all refugees settling in Canada. With the ongoing Syrian crisis, in the last five months 3,800 refugees have already settled in the GTA, while about another 1,000 refugees are just beginning the settlement process. The Canadian government recently announced plans to settle another 10,000 refugees by the end of the year.

Thus, racialized groups, such as immigrants and refugees, not only face



barriers to justice, but they may also lack general knowledge of Canadian customs and laws as they pertain to violence (domestic, sexual, and harassment), child custody, and parents' responsibilities towards their children. MIAG believes that building up the capacity of service providers and community leaders to provide legal knowledge to immigrants and refugees, will have a long-term impact and help more newcomers.

Community lawyers and legal clinics deliver the legal education training, enabling settlement workers to identify clients' legal issues; provide basic legal information; learn about legal jurisdiction; aid clients in navigating the system

through appropriate referrals; and provide clients with next-step guidance.

Currently, Round 1 and Round 2 training sets have been completed at Mississauga and Brampton locations. Round 3 is in progress in Caledon. Round 4 will start on Sept. 1 in Mississauga, and Round 5 starts Oct. 6 in Brampton.

Samina Bangash is Project Coordinator for Closing the Gap. She is a social service worker who was active in Pakistan and Kosovo before coming to Canada. She initiated and established a not-for-profit social and educational organization in Kosovo, and in Pakistan worked for women issues, among other interests.

Phone numbers for agencies who are a part of Closing the Gap project:

Community Legal Education Ontario (CLEO) **416 480-4420**;

Mississauga Community Legal Services , **905 896-2050**;

South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario (SALCO) **416 487-6456**;

FCJ (Faithful Companions of Jesus) Refugee Centre, **416 469-9754**;

Hispanic Development Council, **416 516-0851**;

North Peel & Dufferin Community Legal Services, **905 455-0160**;

Archana Medhekar, **416 977-4204**;

MIAG Centre for Diverse Women and Families, **905 270-6252**

CLOSING THE GAP

Putting children first

Custody of children is part of a series of discussions aimed at showing newcomers and those who try to help them about the law in Canada. The series continues. There's no charge. Contact MIAG at 905 270-6252

BY ARCHANA MEDHEKAR

Immigration to Canada is changing. More immigrants identify as “visible minority.” More are women. More refugees are accepted by Canada.

Many are parents bringing children with them, or having babies as they settle in this country. Certain cultural aspects of parenting may differ from the Canadian way of parenting. Many newcomer immigrants and women face barriers and are vulnerable to domestic violence.

Conflict and separation or divorce has a huge impact on children in any family. It is an added risk factor for children in immigrant families.

Children’s reaction to their parents’ separation/divorce differs by age and gender. Research confirms that divorce creates stressors for children and families. The different outcome from divorce is influenced by quality of post-divorce family life.

Quality of parenting improves for most after an adjustment phase. Mothers and fathers parent differently -- although both can benefit the children in different ways. Even with high parental conflict, children can benefit from warm and effective parenting with either parent.

Here are some notes on the law in Canada regarding some aspects of family life.

The Law of Custody and Access:

Custody and Access is governed by various laws such as the Divorce Act and the Children’s Law Reform Act. Various types of Family Courts have been established in Ontario. In Peel, Ontario Court of Justice and the Superior Court of Justice in Brampton deal with family law matters.

Child Custody:

Child custody is about decision-making related to the children. Health, education, and religion are key in decision-making by a custodial parent. Interim and final

custody arrangements can be agreed between parents or ordered by a court.

Parenting Agreements do not require litigation. Parties could consider a voluntary process of family mediation. In Peel, subsidized family mediation is available at the court through Peel Family Mediation. The parties can voluntarily participate and resolve their disputes in a cost-effective manner.

Types of custody arrangements:

- Sole custody involves one parent;
- Joint custody involves joint decision-making by both parents;
- Parallel custody is an arrangement where parents define areas of decision-making for each;
- Split custody involves split residential arrangements of children residing separately with each of the parents;
- Shared custody involves shared parenting time between the parents.
- A parent of a child or *any other person* may apply to a court for an order respecting custody of or access to the child. The concept of who is a “parent” under the law is not limited to biological parents. Recently, grandparents have been added in the definition of a parent. Although non-parents have a right to apply for access, they would have to establish that they already had a close relationship with the child at the time of the application.

The family court is authorized to make interim orders for custody and access. When dealing with custody of or access to children, whether at the interim or final stage, the test is the “best interests of the children.”

The Best Interest test:

The meaning of “best interests” is as fluid as each child’s circumstances. What is certain, however, is that the focus is on the child.

In determining the best interests of a child, a court considers all the needs and circumstances of the child including: the love, affection and emotional ties, views and preferences of the child in appropriate cases, the length of time the child has lived in a stable home environment, the ability and willingness of the person to provide the child with guidance and education, the necessities of life, any special needs of the child, any plans proposed for the care and upbringing of the child, the permanence and stability of the family unit with which it is proposed that the child will live, and the relationship by blood or through an adoption order between the child and each person who is applying for custody or access.

Domestic Violence:

In February 2006, the Ontario Legislature recognized

in law that abuse or violence committed by one or both of the parties, whether to each other, to a child, another person, etc., is important in determining a person’s suitability to parent.

Courts frequently observe that spousal violence is relevant to parenting ability, both because an abuser is a poor role model, and because children may be at risk of harm in an abuser’s custody.

The Supreme Court has noted the following principles about the effects of domestic violence on children: An abuser who goes without therapy will continue to abuse in another relationship; children who witness abuse can become abused even though the abuse is not intentionally directed at them; abused male children often become abusers and abused female children may become compliant to abusers.

Access:

The family courts recognize a Maximum Contact principle -- to maximize each parent's contact with the child, if appropriate.

The child's age may be significant in deciding whether to allow overnight access. A young child may feel uncomfortable spending the night with the non-custodial parent and may feel unsettled outside his or her home environment.

Where one parent has been extremely abusive to the other, the children's need for stability and security outweigh the benefit of contact with the abuser, and access could be denied.

If a child suffers from a disability requiring special care or treatment, the court would ensure that these special needs will be properly attended to by the non-custodial parent during access visits.

Where the child and the non-custodial parent are virtual strangers to each other, the court could order graduated supervised access that begins from re-introduction of the parent into the child's life.

The law requires the court to consider "the views and preferences of the child, where such views and preferences can reasonably be ascertained." Depending on the age of the child, his or her willingness to see the non-custodial parent may influence the court's award of access. Courts realize that, as children become older, they will simply make their own choice about whom they see. The Office of the Children's Lawyer may be asked by the court to become involved.

Separation/Divorce requires that parents “un-couple” on various levels – personal, religious, and legal. The key is to learn to communicate effectively, maintain healthy boundaries, and be respectful.

Parenting education may help in preventing negative effects of conflict on children. It will enable parents to raise resilient children and to provide a safe and stable home.

Archana Medhekar, is a Certified Family Law Specialist and Accredited Family Mediator, practicing in Peel and Toronto, committed to social justice and community legal education.

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Labour Community Services of Peel

CLOSING THE GAP

Old and ill-treated, but afraid to call the police

BY SHALINI KONANUR

For the past nine years I have worked as a lawyer and as executive director at the South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario (SALCO).

SALCO is one of more than 70 legal clinics funded by Legal Aid Ontario to work with low-income Ontarians in various areas of poverty law. We work with low-income South Asians across Ontario who qualify for legal aid.

Many of our clients face family (or domestic) violence issues which can include partner/spouse abuse, child abuse, forced marriage, human trafficking, and elder abuse.

We also provide legal education in the community, talking to people about abuse and what their legal options are to protect themselves and their families.

Elder abuse is a topic that is often hidden and seldom discussed for reasons that are complex and varied. Many clients are more worried about the impact that disclosure could have on loved ones than they are about their own safety.

Some clients are anxious about immigration, and many are apprehensive about involving the police.

What is elder abuse?

The World Health Organization defines elder abuse as "a single, or repeated act, or lack of appropriate action, occurring within any relationship where there is an expectation of trust which causes harm or distress to an older person".

Elder abuse can take various forms such as financial, physical, psychological and sexual. It can also be the result of intentional or unintentional neglect.

Older adults (aged 55 and older) are one of the fastest-growing populations in Canada. According to Statistics Canada, the proportion of Canadians aged 55 and older will rise from 27% in 2011 to 35% in 2031.

In 2007, Statistics Canada reported that the overall rate of police-reported violence against seniors increased by 20 per cent between 1998 and 2005 -- elder abuse is a very real issue in Canada.



SHALINI KONANUR of Ontario's South Asian Legal Clinic (*Photo supplied*)

What are the cases that we have seen at SALCO?

At SALCO, our cases of elder abuse have included physical abuse (example: hitting, pushing, slapping, etc...); sexual abuse; financial abuse (examples: taking the income of a senior person away from them, or having a senior sign over property to a family member or other community member without understanding what is happening, or taking a loan out in a senior's name without their full and informed consent; or forcing an elder to make a will that is not a true reflection of their wishes); emotional abuse (example: constant verbal abuse); neglect (example: not providing care for a senior in the home, not providing food, not allowing a senior to go out, etc...); forced labour (example: forcing a senior to provide child care for family members); abuse in a long-term care facility or retirement home.

What can we do about elder abuse?

The solution to each situation is different and should also depend on the wishes of the person involved. It is important that the older adult gets to decide the best course of action. It is equally important that he/she is provided with as much information as possible so as to make the best decision.

Some of the options around elder abuse are:

- elder abuse can be a crime under Canada's *Criminal Code*. Several sections of the *Criminal Code* can relate to physical abuse, financial abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, and emotional abuse. Contacting the police is one option in a case of elder abuse, in particular where there is real risk to safety;
- education for seniors can help to support people in cases of elder abuse. For example, talking about signing documents that could potentially transfer money or property to someone else and how to protect from fraud;
- the law has mandatory reporting requirements where elder abuse is happening in a long-term care facility or retirement home. There is a legal obligation to report abuse. For long-term care facilities reporting happens through the Ministry of Health and Long-term Care (1-866-434-0144). For retirement homes reporting happens through the Registrar of the Retirement Homes Regulatory Authority (1-855-275-7472). Unfortunately, the law has no mandatory reporting obligations for elder abuse if the senior is living in a home or any other setting, for example renting an apartment;
- calling the Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee (1-800-366-0335). The Guardianship Investigations branch has legal authority to investigate and intervene in certain cases of elder abuse (neglect from a caregiver, financial fraud from a caregiver, etc...);
- providing supportive resources like counselling to the older adult who is being abused could allow that person to speak out in a safe setting;
- many community resources can do safety planning in cases of elder abuse that help to ensure the older adult's safety. Safety plans help to put in place resources and actions that move the older adult towards a safer environment and also provide information and options for the older adult who is facing abuse.

As you can see there are many forms of elder abuse and many ways to address it. The options and resources in individual cases are important. However, we should also think about our larger societal response to elder abuse. It is important that we enhance public awareness of this issue so that our communities, governments, police forces, health care systems, etc... can all play an informed role in supporting older adults facing abuse.

Shalini Konanur is a lawyer, executive director of the South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario (SALCO)

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■ Problems with Ontario Works?

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PEEL'S PRIORITY:

Increasing affordable housing



**COUNCILLOR
RON STARR**

Finding affordable housing continues to be a struggle for individuals and families trying to make Peel their home.

Yet while the Region of Peel is determined to increase access for residents seeking reasonably-priced homes and to address homelessness concerns, the demand for less-costly housing continues to rise.

As a result, this steep increase in demand presents additional challenges. One such challenge is in the apparent reduction of rental vacancy units across the Region.

As of 2016, the rental vacancy within the Region stands at 1.4%, down,

from 1.5% in 2015. Peel has also experienced a market-rental rate increase averaging 3% between 2015 and 2016 -- from \$1,175 in 2015 to \$1,211 in 2016.

The average price of a residential resale unit sold in Peel increased by 28% from 2015 to 2016 to approximately \$690,405.

With fewer vacant rental units, increases in average market rents, and the higher cost of resale homes, the number of individuals and families on the Region's Centralized Wait List for subsidized housing increased and in 2016 reached 12,958 households.

As well, more people are using Peel's emergency shelter system -- 14,861 in 2016.

Given the alarming reality of these current statistics and the ongoing challenges the Region faces, Peel continues to push forward in its affordable hous-

ing investments.

In this past June alone, the Region of Peel's Council approved funds to build 174 new affordable housing units in Mississauga.

Peel is also partnering with the Salvation Army in Peel, and Peel Streets to Homes, in providing support to people experiencing homelessness and in helping them obtain permanent housing.

Peel Housing and Homelessness Plan strives to bring together various community partners to find innovative ways to increase reasonably-priced housing across the Region. Peel has enhanced its investment significantly in affordable housing -- about 12 cents of every dollar of the Region's tax levy goes to increasing housing and reducing homelessness.

The Region also actively advocates

with federal and provincial governments for new policy and appropriate funding that will help to bolster the supply of affordable housing.

While Peel's housing challenges will not be solved overnight, the Region is tackling difficulties by investing in innovative strategies to increase access to less costly housing and making the issue of affordability a top priority for Peel.

For more information on Peel's housing and homelessness services, visit peelregion.ca/housing

Ron Starr was elected in 2010 as councillor for Mississauga's Ward 6 (approximately Mavis Road west to the Credit River, Britannia Road south to Dundas Street.) Before that, he was president of Deanlee Management Inc., a family-owned development, planning, building and land use consultant firm. He has a B.Sc. in engineering.

Investing in Peel's multi-ethnic business community



**ZAINEB
SURVERY**

Peel Region needs to do more to leverage our economy's two greatest resources: small business and multi-ethnic communities.

Small businesses are lifelines of the Canadian economy, contributing to 30% of national Gross Domestic Product.

The Ontario government's recent announcement of increasing the minimum wage to \$15 was long overdue; however, many businesses are caught off guard. As a result, we can expect a stunt in business growth, at a time when Peel needs expansion.

Government support and policies are not promoting growth for the 135,000-plus businesses in the Region. Based on a 2016 Peel report, the pace of job creation has remained far below the rate by which Peel's working age population is entering the labour market. The need for social assistance has increased.

The unemployment rate in Peel hovers just under 7%. About 12% of the population makes about \$19,000 after taxes, the low income cut-off. Yet the minimum cost of living here is \$39,000 for a family of four, for nutritious food, clothing, transport, and accommodation.

Take for example the city of Brampton, which is made up of over 40% in the labour workforce from ages 20-49, as of 2011. Losing out to the LRT expansion exasperates their frustration in finding work across GTA. As a result, there is chronic unemployment in the city, adding on concentrated poverty and elevated crime rates. Such circumstances exist because business and industry cohesion has failed in Brampton.

At the same time, there has been insufficient institutional support for immigrants willing to take on business risk. Economic research and our own Canadian history demonstrate that immigrants bring in indispensable elements of previously earned wealth, and/or human capital to set up their own establishments. At times, immigrants expand trade with their country of origin, allowing advantageous access to market

opportunities for Canada. Ultimately the wealth generated from business circulates back into the local economy through taxes, and salary earned by the employee being spent on other businesses in the area. Everyone benefits.

Yet with the lack of support from the Region and frankly all levels of government, overall business growth has not kept up with the rate by which the immigration in the region has been increasing. Two-thirds of the growth in the Canadian population has resulted from immigration. Over 50% of Mississauga and Brampton is composed of people of multi-ethnic background, where most have moved here within the last 30 years or less.

Rather than a laissez-faire approach, more policies and financial support must be given by the Region of Peel to support small businesses, particularly to the multi-ethnic communities. Politicians and the Region need to foster intercultural understandings between how wealth created from multi-ethnic communities can result in less economic disparity for the area.

Region of Peel needs to consid-

er providing and expanding business grants to those taking on a limited, or general partnership. Currently, the Region has a Community Investment Program that provides grants to NON-profit agencies in response to community or social service needs in the area.

The Region should also consider grants to FOR-profit agencies, which could empower their own communities. Or the Region could expand grants to Brampton and Mississauga Boards of Trade, which are non-profit organizations. The BOT can further assess which business, represented by a multi-ethnic entrepreneur, is likely to generate the highest return as shown by a submitted business plan.

A pilot study and project is worth considering. There is no downside to this option, only a benefit to all stakeholders.

Zaineb Survery is a writer and advocate for food security. She has presented at the Canadian Federation of Humanities and Social Sciences on how poverty can be alleviated through Canada's multi-ethnic population and agribusiness industry.

Saving teenage lives



NORMA NICHOLSON

This article provides a brief overview about youth and suicide, the sensitivity of the topic due to taboo, linked to stigma, shame and guilt and what we as communities can do to help save the lives of our teenagers.

There is an urgent need to increase the knowledge of parents, community members and others to ensure that young people live healthy lives and reach their potential. More mental health resources are required.

Knowledge is a very powerful tool as indicated by this mother's story:

A mother found that her 15-year-old son was having suicidal thoughts so she took him to the hospital for help. No mental health specialist was on duty that evening, and she was advised to take him home and keep an eye on him. An appointment was made with a community clinic for the following morning.

The mother watched over her son until midnight when he fell asleep. At 4 a.m., she was jarred awake by a thump from the attic but she thought she was dreaming and went back to sleep.

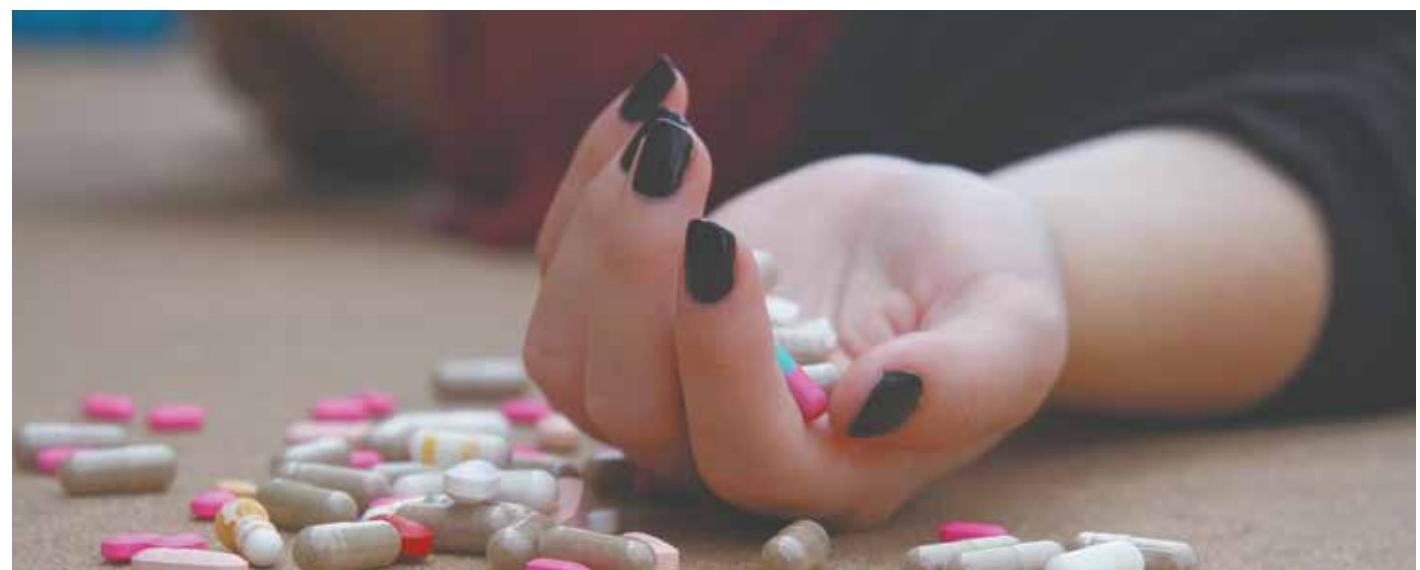
When she got up at 7 a.m., her son was not in his room. He had hanged himself in the attic.

She later reflected on what was meant by "keep an eye on him".

Many of our teens are suffering in shame and silence, afraid to tell anyone about their inner fears. In 2016, Kids Help Phone surveyed 1,319 youngsters ages 13 – 18 across Canada. One in five reported contemplating suicide and one in 10 had detailed plans on how to do it.

Many myths surround the topic of suicide, but we need to find the truth. We must ensure that adolescents who feel isolated, have mental health challenges, are being bullied and may be considering ending such psychological pain by suicide, are supported and know how to overcome these feelings.

Adolescence is a time of dramatic changes. Growing from a young child



to a teen can be complex and challenging. Teens feel tremendous pressure to succeed in school, at home and in their social groups. Unlike us, they don't know that difficult situations do not last forever. Suicide represents a final desperate attempt by a young person to end what he or she perceives to be an unsolvable trouble. It is a complex phenomenon, determined by multiple factors intersecting at one point during the life of that teen.

THE MYTHS OF SUICIDE:

Young people rarely think about suicide:

Wrong. The Kids Help Line survey shows that many teens have considered taking their own lives and some have concrete plans on how to do it.

Talking about suicide will give young people the idea or permission to commit suicide:

Wrong. Talking calmly about suicide without fear and judgment can bring relief to a teen who is very afraid to have such a discussion. The minds of some adolescents are not developed to think of alternatives.

Suicide is sudden and unpredictable:

Wrong. Most often suicide is a process, not an event. A youth may have been thinking about it for some time. Research shows that eight out of ten teens who die by suicide gave some or even many indications of their intentions. When you know a teen, you can see the change, some are subtle, some

are pronounced. Some teens are not as happy attending school as before, may be sleeping more or fewer hours, may even say "I feel down and not to worry about me", may feel sad and hopeless and avoid social situations.

Suicidal youth are openly seeking attention and try to manipulate others:

Wrong. Efforts by a teen to grab attention or manipulate others should always be taken seriously. A teen may say to a parent: "I love my girlfriend so much, if she leaves me I am going to kill myself". This teen may be having an overwhelming desire to escape an emotional situation that he doesn't know how to handle. Sharing this is a way of bringing this emotion to someone's attention. Don't ignore it.

A suicidal youth will always be at risk of committing suicide:

Wrong. The danger can be eliminated by addressing underlying mental health is-

sues, learning effective coping techniques and feeling supported by counsellors, family and peers. A very small percentage may go on to commit suicide if the underlying causes are not managed well. A clinician will look at what is the likelihood for reoccurrence of the overwhelming feelings, events or actions that led to the problem.

Most youth do not want to kill themselves; they are seeking help. For every completed suicide by one young person, 20 others have tried. Males are more likely to complete suicide attempts due to the violent methods used such as hanging and firearms. Girls tend to use less brutal methods such as overdoses.

Norma Nicholson, BA, MA, is a registered nurse, now retired, who spent many years managing health care for youth in jail and working with young people who were homeless or otherwise marginalized, educating them to prevent suicide. She is vice-chair of Peel Police Services Board which oversees policing in Peel.

A proud Canadian Union representing workers and promoting community spirit is a commitment we take seriously.

UNIFOR Local 1285

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Visit peelregion.ca

Positive Parenting Workshops

Join us for **FREE** workshops to refresh your parenting skills, learn new information, and make connections with other parents in your community.

There are workshops available on a variety of topics based on parent interest. Some topics include:

- Positive Discipline for Young Children
- Toddler Development and Behaviour
- Developing Children's Self-Esteem and Self-Regulation
- Young Children's Screen Time
- Parenting Teenagers
- Single Parenting with Success
- Anger and Parenting.

Workshops for Fall 2017 start in mid-September and continue until November.

They will be located at sites across Brampton, Caledon and Mississauga, 6:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m.

- A light meal for parents and children is provided.
- **FREE** child care is available with literacy and numeracy based activities.

For more information and to register, please visit peelregion.ca/children or call **905-791-7800**.



Peel Child Care Subsidy

The Region of Peel provides financial help to eligible families with the cost of licensed child care for children up to 12 years of age. Eligibility is based on income level and reason for care.

Licensed care is available in centre, school or home-based programs.

Visit us at peelregion.ca/children, or call us at **905-793-9200** to:

- check for licensed child care programs
- apply for a fee subsidy.

